

America's Armed Forces. I thank them for their dedication and service to this nation.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
OF DIANE NARASAKI

HON. PRAMILA JAYAPAL

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2018

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Diane Narasaki on her retirement after 23 years of service at the Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS). Throughout her career, Diane demonstrated her deep, personal commitment to civil rights and social justice by standing up for immigrants and refugees, defending diversity and encouraging civic engagement.

Diane was born in Seattle not long after the end of World War II. She was driven to a career in social justice in part because of the inhumane treatment of Japanese and Japanese Americans incarcerated during the war. She ultimately built ACRS into the globally-recognized powerhouse it is today, growing it from

14,000 members to over 35,000 and from 76 staff members to 270.

In one of her early acts at ACRS, Diane organized the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community to mount a response to 1996 federal welfare reform legislation, which barred legal immigrants from accessing certain federal safety net programs, including food stamps and medical assistance. Thanks to Diane's leadership and the tireless advocacy of communities across Washington, the state passed legislation to replace many of the public assistance programs for immigrants that were lost at the federal level.

Also, during her time at ACRS, Diane organized the API community to increase funding for employment training and naturalization services targeted to help low-income immigrants, refugees, and those with limited English proficiency to gain citizenship. With her leadership, ACRS obtained federal funding to develop integrated mental health services, which had an incredible impact on the lives and well-being of API people. Prior to joining ACRS, Diane also served as Executive Director of the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office, co-founded the King County Asian

Pacific Islander Coalition and was named by President Obama to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Her contributions to the API community are innumerable.

Diane has received numerous awards to recognize these contributions. The Seattle City Council proclaimed a "Diane Narasaki Day" in 2006. In 2009, Seattle Magazine declared her one of one of their "most influential people of the year." She received a Puget Sound Business Journal Women of Influence Award, a Ford Foundation Leadership for a Changing World Award, the ACLU of Washington's William O. Douglas Award and many, many more.

Still, what makes Diane so special is not these awards but her dedication to lifting up marginalized people in our community and across the country. Though she is moving on from ACRS, I have no doubt that she will continue to thread her passion and activism into everything she does. I commend Diane Narasaki and the incalculable impact of her life's work. I wish her a healthy and joyous retirement.